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Current Status for Teaching Nursing Informatics in Denmark, Canada, and Australia

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Abstract

Nursing schools in Denmark, Canada, and Australia are all currently involved in integrating nursing informatics in the nursing bachelor programme. This paper gives a brief update on the current situation of nursing informatics education for bachelor level nurses in each of the three countries. Whilst there are differences in the curriculum in each country, it is important to share knowledge about undergraduate nursing informatics worldwide to ensure consistency.

Keywords:

Nursing informatics, bachelors programme, curriculum

Introduction

The explosion in information technology systems in the healthcare setting has resulted in a transformation of work practices. Nurses therefore need knowledge, skills, judgment, and understanding of the importance of informatics from the commencement of their training. This paper is a brief description of the current uptake of nursing informatics (NI) for undergraduate students in Denmark, Canada, and Australia.

Materials and Methods

A review of the published and grey literature was conducted. More specifically, the authors searched the following databases: CINAHL and Medline using the terms: “nursing”, “informatics”, “Canada”, “Denmark” and “Australia”. Grey literature was also reviewed.

Results

Nursing informatics is a topic area that needs to be integrated into the nursing curriculum internationally; however, each country has achieved different levels of integration of informatics into their degrees.

Denmark The order of nursing curriculum describes that the program in nursing informatics is to qualify the students in the theoretical and clinically technological development and to meet the people’s need for nursing informatics. [1] Nursing informatics is placed in the bachelor’s program, 18 months after start and holds two 2 ECTS – points (27 lessons).

Canada In 2012, the Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing (CASN) and Canada Health Infoway developed Nursing Informatics Competencies for Entry-to-practice Registered Nurses [2] and learning tools and resources that can help faculty to with teaching students undergraduate nursing informatics (see 2,3). CASN is actively involved in

supporting faculty in a peer to peer network to help faculty master nursing informatics competencies and integrate them into nursing curricula across the country. Peer leaders are engaging nursing faculty across the country [3].

Australia In 2012 the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council released new standards for accreditation of nursing education. These standards include the requirement that student nurses have “familiarity with health informatics, including person-controlled electronic healthcare records” [4]. The importance of developing “the capacity to innovatively use information technology and electronic resources to research the growing evidence base for improved care and treatment methods” [4] is also acknowledged. As a result of this upgrade to the standards it is not possible for a nursing degree to be accredited in Australia unless it includes informatics.

Findings

Differences in the development, evolution and integration of nursing informatics into undergraduate education between the countries exist. Denmark has integrated nursing informatics successfully into the bachelor program. Canada and Australia have recently commenced this process. It is evident that the sharing of information about best practice in curriculum development in integration of informatics will enhance the uptake of this important area in undergraduate degrees.

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